



## 2013 Archive

**Q: Sir, With the South Gate now open, I was hopeful that this gate would be open to base workers. I live out that way and have to pass the south gate before I get to the main gate to gain access to the base. What is the reason that only commercial and pass required traffic is allowed to enter the base through this newly renovated base entrance? Is there a way to allow early morning traffic through this entrance? Prior to 0700 or 0730?**

**A:** Great question. The South Gate will be open for outbound traffic starting 21 Oct. from 0600 to 1800. All inbound traffic will still proceed as normal through the vehicle search area before entering the installation. Thanks again for your question.

**Q: Why does the AF categorize e-cigarettes as a tobacco product, and why do e-cigarette smokers have to stand in a designated tobacco use area on base? They are not a cigarette, they do not have any tobacco in them, they do not produce smoke and they are not carcinogenic. E-cigarettes are cheaper than any of those items, cleaner, less offensive, no second hand smoke, no smell and just as effective if not better as a method for cutting back and quitting smoking. I and many others have taken the steps to quit smoking. I know that e-cigarettes will not be fully embraced by the Air Force and that is not what I'm wanting. It's been 3 weeks since I've switched over from cigarettes to my vapor stick (e-cigarette), and I feel great. I am now a non-smoker. What I would like to see is a little more leeway on where the vapor sticks (e-cigarettes) are able to be used, and maybe AFI 40-102 adjusted.**

**A:** Several weeks ago I asked my staff to research e-cigarettes following several questions and an article in the Altus Times. As you correctly stated, AFI 40-102 prohibits tobacco use on AF installations, except in in DTAs

(Designated Tobacco Areas) and housing units. That definition includes e-cigarettes, water pipes, and smokeless tobacco such as chew. My understanding is that the AFI has been challenged in regards to e- cigarettes and the Federal Service Impasse Panel (a federal labor board) sided with the Air Force to continue banning the use of e-cigarettes in accordance with the AFI. The Panel stated, "there is no scientific evidence conclusively addressing whether the vapor emitted by electronic cigarettes could harm others." Thus, there is little I can do at this point to address your situation besides recommending a discussion with your leadership regarding flexibility in your breaks to utilize the DTA when other smokers are not present. Thanks for your question and congratulations on your progress towards quitting smoking.

**Q: When talking to neighbors and friends that live on base, this was brought up in our conversation. We noticed signs that were posted in both the Club and Charlie's about supervision of your children. Yes, I do feel there is a lack of this in our base facilities and hope the parents take note of this. The question was brought up about putting a play area for the kids over at Charlie's. I know that a lot of families like to spend time on a Friday night or Saturday and there is really no place for the kids to play other than the putting green. Is there any way we put play equipment up right outside of Charlie's?**

**A:** Thank you for the great question. I appreciate your support of our FSS activities as we take great pride in providing a wide range of activities and facilities to support all our Airmen. The safety of our children while on base is a top priority along with ensuring we provide a good customer experience for all patrons. This can be especially challenging when children are unsupervised in and around adult oriented facilities such as club bars.

Unfortunately, installing play equipment outside Charlie's is not an option at this time. The patio area is heavily used by adult patrons and the grass area just beyond the patio is part of the putting green dedicated for use by golfers. Due to the difficult nature of maintaining a Golf Course, the putting green will continue to be for golfers only.

Additionally, in order to maximize use, Air Force playgrounds are typically located in or near community parks and housing areas. With very limited resources for these types of projects in our current fiscal environment, adding a playground near Charlie's is currently unattainable. Additionally, we are not in the position to relocate existing playgrounds either.

I realize this may not be the answer you were hoping for but I do appreciate your suggestion and it allowed me an opportunity to look at all our options.

**Q: Sir, just a quick observation about the South Gate. When you say that all traffic entering this gate must go through the vehicle search area, does that also include people (with base identification) riding bicycles?**

**What is the procedure for vehicles that exit the gate to go Pass & ID? Shouldn't they also be going through the vehicle search? In my eyes, I'd consider it a breach in security. After all there is a parking area on the East side of hangar 509. I know it might be inconvenient to have to walk, but then we wouldn't be allowing vehicles back on Base without being properly searched. After all, you say in your prior response that "all inbound traffic will still proceed as normal through the vehicle search area before entering the installation."**

A: Dear Altus Team Member, currently, the south gate is exclusively a commercial vehicle and visitor gate for inbound traffic. Thus, our security practices require all commercial vehicles, visitors in privately owned vehicles & bicyclists entering the south gate to go through the vehicle search area. We do not turn away individuals who mistakenly come to the south gate. However, we will remind them about using our other gates and they will receive the same search procedures as commercial vehicles and visitors. Of note...we recently began allowing outbound traffic as a matter of convenience from 0600-1800 Monday through Friday.

For vehicles departing the south gate to visit Bldg 428 (Pass & ID), they are indeed allowed to return on base without being searched. Those vehicles have remained in positive control as they aren't permitted to go further than

Bldg 428. They are still required to present their CAC or DBIDS card to the Security Forces member at the guard post upon reentry.

We are continuing to improve on these and all security processes regarding installation access and we appreciate your feedback.

Thanks again for your submission to my Commander's Corner!

**Q: Can anyone tell me where the "Thrift Store" has moved to or if it is going to be reopened. I went to the Chapel Annex and the ARC and no one seems to know anything about a THRIFT STORE period. Thank you.**

A: Dear Altus Team Member, thank you for your question. The Altus Spouse's Club Board unanimously decided to close the Thrift Store (formerly located in Building 164) due to a lack of financial viability in Aug. 2013. My understanding is that other avenues to buy and sell used items, such as Facebook pages & Altus Community Garage Sale pages, have made the Thrift Store less relevant than in the past. Unfortunately, there are no plans to re-open the Thrift Store.

The Airman's Attic, which serves a similar function on base, is still open. The Airman's Attic is located in building 116 (the Airman Resiliency Center) and is a non-profit organization run by the First Sergeants Association and the base Chapel. Permanent party active duty enlisted personnel and their family members, E-5 or below, can acquire items from the Attic free of charge. It is open from 1100-1400 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 0900-1200 the first Saturday of every month. If you have any questions about the Airman's Attic, the Base Chapel can be contacted at (580) 481-7485. Thank you again for your submission to my Commander's Corner!

**Q: If I may be allowed to ask sir, what might be the possibility of us civil service retired military folks once again being allowed to access the chow hall for lunch and/or dinner? During the times in the past when we could, I found the dining hall to be both enjoyable and the food pretty good. And it was at a pretty good price too. Thank you for your time.**

A: Dear Team Member, first, please accept my thanks for your question. We are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life for all our Altus team members, and I welcome the comments of our members and their families.

Unfortunately, Air Force Instructions only allow permanent party civilian members to use the enlisted dining facility if the installation commander determines other facilities, including NAF food activities and base restaurant, are not available, adequate, or readily accessible to the duty location. I have permitted DoD civilians to eat the midnight meal at the Solar Inn Dining Facility because other facilities are not readily available.

Additionally, I have chosen to invite any military retirees and their immediate families to join us at the Solar Inn for the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. At this time, however, civilians are not permitted to eat normal breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals at the Solar Inn because other options are readily available on base and in close proximity downtown.

Please continue to raise any ideas you have for improving on-base dining options, as your innovative, valuable thinking improves life for all our team members. Thank you again for your submission to my Commander's Corner!

**Q: Sir, A rumor has been circulating among the officer ranks that only "school selects" are going to be offered jobs on the wing staff in the future. Is this true and could this drive animosity from officers who are not "school selects" but are still working hard at Altus AFB? Thank you for addressing this rumor.**

A: I appreciate this question as it provides an opportunity to discuss why and how we hire individuals at the group and wing.

First, the wing and groups will continue to need assistance from squadron personnel to effectively operate. Second, the process of selection is simple. We need the right people in the right jobs. Thus, squadron commanders recommend their personnel for key billets at the group and wing levels to include why these are the right people for the jobs. For instance, we need specific expertise in some jobs. Additionally, the timing of upcoming promotion boards, school selection boards and special programs, in relation to each Airman's timing, greatly impacts the selection process. Therefore, simply selecting "school selects" would not only limit the number of individuals available at the wing, it would prevent the wing and groups from utilizing one of our best methods to push our "candidates" for school & other programs while also improving the overall operation of our wing and groups.

Bottom line: There is no merit to this rumor and we will continue to offer great opportunities to both school candidates and school selects in order to place the right people in the right jobs. Thanks again for the question.

**Q: Sir, first off thank you for your time on opening the south gate up. Just Wondering if there is any way the gym could be opened at 4am or 4:30. I Know they tried 3 am for a while guess not enough people came. Just makes it kind of hard to work out and be at work by 7. Sometimes it's real crowded. I Know you're busy and thanks for your service to the country.**

A: Dear Altus Team Member, thank you for your question. Based on historical customer demand and facility use, the current Fitness Center hours are 0500-2400 M-F and 0800-2300 Sat-Sun. However, we are in the process of establishing the Altus AFB Fitness Center as a 24 hour access facility. This AF wide program allows customers to access the facility after hours by using their CAC/ID Cards. The Altus AFB Fitness Center is scheduled to receive this equipment and transition to a 24 hour fitness facility in late CY 2014. It's always a pleasure to serve with the fine men and women of the United States Air Force, particularly here at Altus!

**Q: I was wondering, along with many others, what local area is considered. (How many miles/hours). Clarification would be very beneficial.**

A: Dear Altus Team Member, thanks for your question. AFI36-3003 (Military Leave Program), paragraph 6.7, defines the local area as "the place where the member lives and from which he or she commutes to the duty station." Now I know what you're thinking, this isn't the most clear definition. I could easily write a wing policy letter more clearly defining what "the local area" means for Team Altus. Instead, I've decided to give each individual Group or Squadron Commander the ability to define "the local area" based on their unit's mission. I'd suggest contacting your Commander or First Sergeant for clarification on this issue. Thanks again for your submission to my Commander's Corner.